

Explanation of the Winding alluding to the Subject of the Book

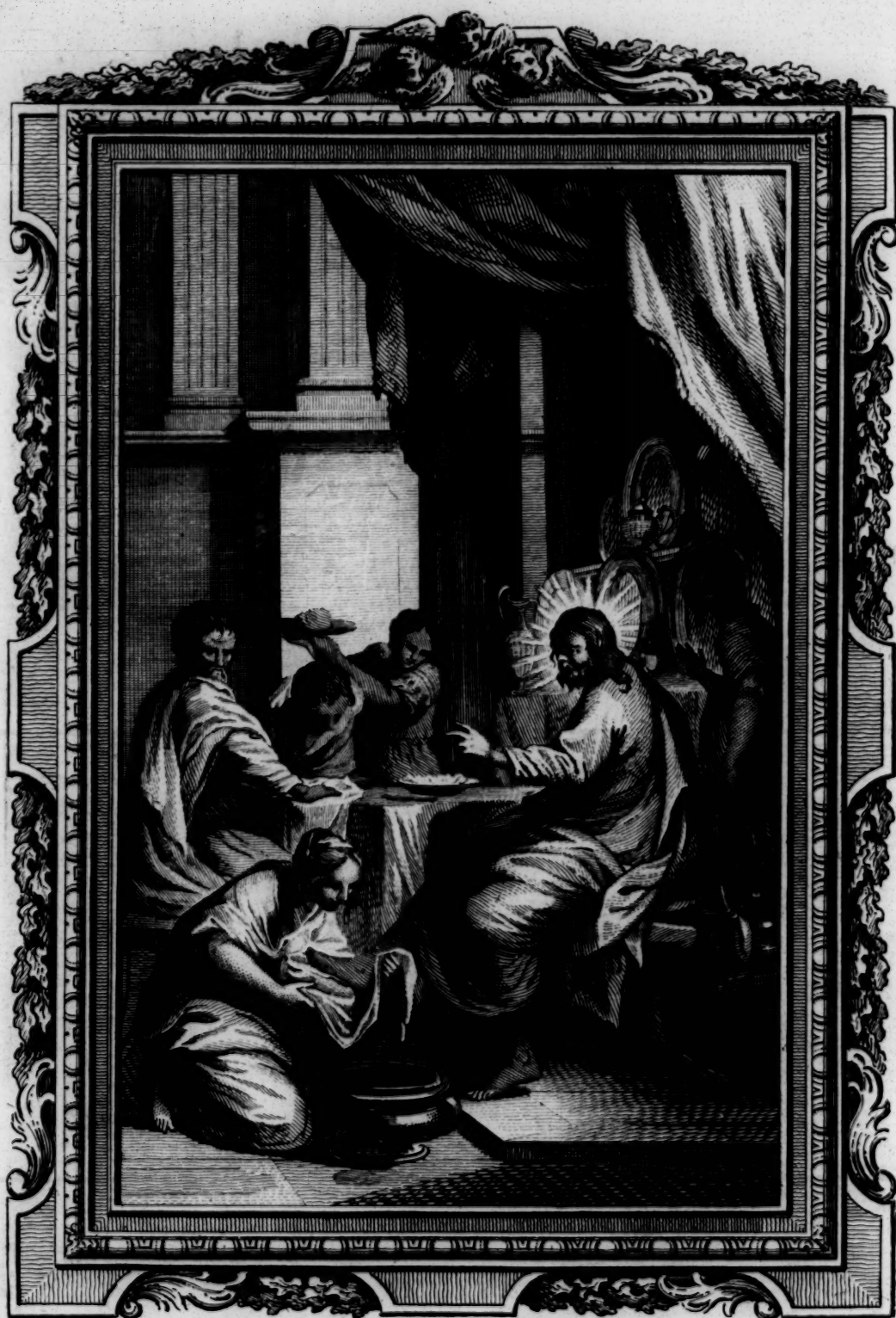
O Fair Britannia (a) think, how swift thy Hours
fly. Tho' thy beauty should dazzle as the Sun,
and all thy ways be strewed with Roses, yet
(such is the course ordained by Natures God!)
both it & them must fade & Perish as a Flower
and seem irrevocably lost. But surely
as the revolving season of the Spring restores
the beauty of the vegetable World; when
the appointed Period comes, Men will rise
from the grave, never to wither or decay.
Therefore

a. Applicable to Individuals whose
Passion for amusement is too strong,
but not intended in a rational view

Therefore
Whilst thy time is on the Wing
Tune thy Harp with joy & sing,
Praises to th' Almighty King.
Whose tender Providential Eye,
Will conduct thee to the Sky ;
There to shine in glory bright
As Stars now glitter in thy Sight.







THOUGHTS

ON

THE USE AND ADVANTAGES

OF

MUSIC,

AND OTHER AMUSEMENTS

*Most in esteem in the polite world, and the means of
improving them to make our proper happiness
and our pleasures but one object.*

IN NINE LETTERS.

*In answer to a letter relating to modern musical entertain-
ments, &c.*

L O N D O N :

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THE OXFORD

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To the R E A D E R.

IF you know what is passing in the world of pleasure and amusement, you will easily judge of the consistency of the sentiments, and the reality and importance of the facts contained in the following pages.

The writer, whoever you may suppose him to be, is one of the busy, active, pleasure-taking part of mankind; but he has absented himself for a few evenings from the “various bustle of resort,” to sit in judgment on his own heart, as well as to call other people to account; not that he supposes there is any such Being as a man devoid of vanity, or that himself is less infected than some of his neighbours: but as amusement is the great object of his lucubrations, his very love of pleasure has led him to spend some leisure silent hours in committing his thoughts to writing. If he thinks erroneously, or writes improperly, or inefficaciously, he may so far discover his faults; but his zeal for religion, and the warmth of his wishes for the happiness of his friends, acquaintance, and fellow-subjects, will, he hopes, be so apparent as to require no vindication.

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LETTER

L E T T E R I.

My good Friend,

I SHOULD have made a much earlier answer to your letter, if I had thought it of less importance. I heartily commend your zeal: it is strictly rational, truly religious: it is founded in that reason which the great author of nature has given us, to comprehend the laws to which he requires our obedience. The same reason, which with a *still* but audible voice, assures us, that if we comply with the dictates of it, we shall hardly fail of being happy; if we carelessly or presumptuously neglect those dictates, and refine away the substance of the law which he hath set before us, what can we *in reason* expect but punishment? And what is that law but the revelation of his supreme will, whose authority we cannot call in question?

As to the subject of your present animadversions, which *you* imagine to be pregnant

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with

with mischief, if we carry our thoughts back to the tremendous promulgation of the law, which requires the keeping holy the sabbath, we must take pains if we mistake the meaning and intention of the great legislator. There were, I presume, among the chosen people of God, as wise men as any we can now boast of; and we find, they considered it as an injunction no less awful than any of the *ten*, however some of them may appear to be founded more on the great principle of moral obligations. But, what moral precept can be stronger, than an express command to set a-part one day in seven; to commemorate the great work of creation, and the honour due to the creator? “The first institution of the sabbath was on purpose that men periodical-ly celebrating the creation, might thereby be preserved from irreligion and idolatry.” And does not the reason hold still the same? *We*, perhaps, are in no danger of worshipping stocks and stones, tho’ the Papists have a propensity to such worship; but *we* are in the same danger of having no object at all to worship, except the idols of our fancy in our amuse-

amusements, and the hurry, pomp, and parade of life.

When by their wickedness the Jews were grown ripe for destruction, and approaching near to the dissolution of their state, some of their rulers were so *ignorant*, or, to answer a particular malevolent purpose, so *perverse*, as to refine away the meaning of the sabbath. There was a time when they were forbidden to gather sticks to make fires on that day; and if this was, no doubt for wise reasons, *commanded*, there could be *no reason* for disobedience. It is very evident from the command, with regard to the sabbath, as it now stands delivered down to us, that a day was appointed for *rest*, as well as *worship*, for the use of men, in regard both to their temporal and eternal happiness; and also for the preservation of those works of creation which were immediately under our direction, namely our *servants*, our *horses*, *asses*, *oxen*, and all *beasts* appointed for labor. This comprehended one part of the great duty of humanity which is of eternal obligation.

So far from the followers of Christ being forbidden to do works of mercy or necessity, on

the sabbath day, our Saviour, on occasion of his disciples plucking ears of corn, warns us expressly to avoid the preciseness of the Pharisaical hypocrisy—The Pharisees might seem to err on the cautious side, but their objection was senseless and perfidious: it was as if religious obedience was not consistent with reason and the social state of man; that one or the other must fall; whereas it is obvious that they mutually support each other. This gave rise to that memorable saying of the Son of God, “the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath.”

When the Jews sought to slay our Saviour, alledging that he had *broken the sabbath day*, he tells them, “my Father worketh hitherto, and
 “ I work.” His meaning is, “Ye have a
 “ very wrong notion of the true sabbatical rest
 “ which God has commanded. From his
 “ work of creation, God does indeed *now*
 “ rest: but in acts of providence, preservation,
 “ government, doing good to his creatures; in
 “ these things my Father worketh hitherto,
 “ and *will* work for ever; and in these in-
 “ stances I also work, and every good man
 “ works

“ works both on the sabbath day, and continually.”

Whatever we may alledge against the perverse Jews of that time, they are *now*, I believe, stricter in observing their sabbath day, and in their preparation for that day, than we are: and for the same reason that they begin it on the *evening before*, and we do not; we have no such claim to the *evening after*, i. e. the evening of our sabbath day, as they have to theirs, if either can properly lay in any claim.

After performing our *public* devotions twice in a day, which but for our indolence and voluptuousness we certainly should do, if we consider what acts of kindness and mercy are in our power to perform and carry into practice, we shall never be at a loss to employ our time profitably. Instead of being at a dead list, and in a state of apathy or impatience of the sluggish hours, we shall grasp the fleeting moments, and rejoice from hour to hour, that such moments are saved to us out of the miserable wreck of our time.

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We have unhappily ingenuity enough in this nation, to construe away the most obvious meanings of all laws, but not to find proper employment for the mind; and therefore every new expedient, tending to deviate from the apparent design of the great lawgiver, ought to give us the *alarm*. We live in an age, devoted to *amusement*, perhaps not so wicked as some former times have been; but neither have we so much masculine sense, or resolution in the cause of religion: we do not seem to have such steadiness in principle, or simplicity in manners, as some ages past have had. We are ready enough to suppose the *present* is the most enlightned age: but how is the tree known but by its fruits? and what signifies *our light*? If we do not see what we are about, we are in *darkness*. Upon the whole there seems to be as much reason to be on our guard at this time, as there has been at any other, and perhaps much more than at some periods.

We are often restless, sometimes turbulent about our *liberty*, politically considered. I believe we should better understand our temporal condition as subjects of a free state, if we stu-

died more that divine law, in which is *perfect liberty*. And, if we were more fearful of offending against the laws of God, it is probable we should be more trusty guardians of the laws of our land.

If the travel of ten thousand years cannot change the constitution of the divine law: if heaven and earth will pass away, but not one jot of the divine command be abrogated, we ought to look well to ourselves, that we do not trespass, by departing from the plain paths of common sense and experience. The law, which was so immediately delivered to the Jews, was undoubtedly alike promulgated to us: it is our *magna charta*, the violation of which may not banish us from our native land, but make us exiles from heaven. It may not deprive us of all hope of passing through life in a restless flutter, but it roots up the foundation of hope of everlasting rest. Does not this consideration render the commandments of God as awful to us as if his voice were heard from a mountain, or a burning bush? But our advantage is, that we may have recourse to the words of the Son of God himself, when in
form

form as a man, he conversed with men, and instructed us in so familiar a manner, that if it were consistent to draw any comparison, the latter might claim the pre-eminence. *His declarations were the completion of the revelation of the will of the great father of mankind.*

And what is the *common sense* of the world in these times, wherever either the law of Moses, or the law of Christ is practically understood?—When christianity became exceedingly corrupted by the superstitions of the church of Rome, and the yoke was insufferable to common sense and reason, the christian world divided. The papists preserve their pomp, their pageantry, and many opinions and customs which are offensive to protestants. Among these is the custom of what we *used* to call *breaking the sabbath*: How it is now denominated, I cannot tell, for there are fashions even in our religion. It is certain the papists have *public and private plays, operas, balls, musical meetings, assemblies for cards*, and such like, on sundays. We are generally very cautious how we *imitate them*, that we may not fall back into superstition, or adopt a doctrine,

doctrine, which, like the tenets of *Mahommed*, flatter so much the corruption of human nature, in many instances.

The reason the people give for this indulgence, is, that having *said mass*, and performed the work required by the priest, they have nothing further to do, but divert themselves. *We* do not reason after the same manner, for *you teach us better things*. And as to the *reverence* due to this day, the *papist*, upon a comparison of it with certain days dedicated to his saints, says, the sabbath comes about every week, the saints-day only once in a year; consequently the saints-day, appointed by the church, is greater than the sabbath, he does not add in so many words, *though appointed by God*; yet in fact and deed he maintains this doctrine. This I know to be the opinion of the common people in some popish countries.

In the mean time, numbers of men of superior education amongst them, seeing how difficult it is to reconcile the belief and practices of the church of Rome with common sense and reason; and being impatient under cer-

tain injunctions contained in the christian law, with respect to *temperance* and *chastity*, absolutely discard *christianity*, as a fable, fit only to amuse the vulgar.

On the other hand, we find some protestants construe the injunction, with regard to the sabbath, in so rigid a manner, as not to suffer any meat to be dress'd in their houses on this day. They continue praying, singing psalms or hymns, reading and hearing the word of God. Thus they too often make religion a laborious task, and groan under the burthen; the consequence of which is, that it frequently degenerates into hypocrisy, fanaticism, or pious frenzy; extremes as dangerous as those of the church of Rome.

I grant, if we mean to be guarded at all points, we must consider *how* to keep holy the sabbath day. “ The manner in which it
 “ ought to be observed among christians is,
 “ in attending the public worship of God; in
 “ hearing the word; in reading the scriptures;
 “ in instructing those, over whom we have any
 “ kind of influence, in the knowledge and
 “ practice of their duty. In a word, it is to
 “ be

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“ be spent in works of *necessity*, and in works
 “ of *charity*, and in whatsoever tends without
 “ superstition, and without affectation, to the
 “ real honor of God, and to the true interest
 “ and promotion of religion and virtue in the
 “ world.” This opinion, indeed, leaves an
 ample latitude according to our abilities, and
 the indulgence of providence with regard
 to the means we are entrusted with. If we
 dissolve the mind in dissipation, or brace it up
 beyond the measure which human nature can
 bear, our reason will forsake us; whereas we
 should endeavor to retain it as a constant com-
 panion, a faithful solicitor, an able counsel-
 lor, in the important suit wherein our souls are
 at stake. Without the exercise of *reason* there
 can be no *faith*, and without faith there can
 be no religion.

If we discard one commandment, or grossly
 mistake it, the others may follow. What sig-
 nifies superiority in *speculation*, if in *practice*
 we are as absurd, as the church of Rome? If
 our fellow christians of that church are pro-
 hibited reading the scriptures, by the tyranni-
 cal policy of priests, and we prohibit our-
 selves,

selves, by our own dissipation, not allowing ourselves any leisure, even on the day appointed by God for *rest*, what can be expected but ignorance and levity? I fear your remark is just, and that but few of the polite world do really read the *sacred writings*, so as, from an habitual reflection on their truth and consistency, to make them the rule of their lives. If, instead of recollecting ourselves, and forming our actions and manners to a greater reverence for the sabbath, we *glide into new modes and further means of dissipation*, what can be expected but a further decline of religion? The laws of nature in the *moral*, more than in the *material* world, will not be *changed* for our *amusement*.

I am very sincerely yours.

LETTER

L E T T E R II.

SO far I agree with you entirely in your observations. But do you really conceive that the women, who have excited your attention, are aware of any evil, or that *they* are more in fault than the men? I rather think our sex most in the wrong. Be well assured, my dear friend, that in general there is no such mighty difference as is vulgarly imagined. Were women to write as often *against men*, as men do *against women*, we should see a fairer state of the question; but the interest of neither would be promoted in the least degree by such an absurd contest. Women are neither better nor worse than men make them by *education*, or *temptation*.

Granting that upon the comparison, *imagination* predominates most in the female breast; women are more susceptible of impressions of religion than we are, consequently as to the first and great ends of human wisdom, heaven does not seem to be in the smallest degree less indulgent

dulgent to them, than to us. Perhaps it was meant, as both are equally accountable for their actions, that the deficiency in judgment should be made up in this apparent difference.

You may not have had the opportunities which providence has thrown in my way, of discovering the arts of women, who by profession dishonor human nature. But, I can tell you with equal truth, that I have known stronger proofs of *principle* founded in religion, and more fortitude in the hour of death, in a woman of virtue, than in any man I have been yet acquainted with. Therefore rather draw a curtain over our own shame, who make so ill a use of our understandings, than employ yours in triumphing over weaknesses, which are owing so much to the narrowness of education.

The difference however is remarkable: Observe minutely, where there is a foundation of moral education above the standard of *cards, dress, and equipage*, you will find a greater degree of ingenuousness, more humility, a truer spirit of devotion, than among persons of the

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same rank of our sex. Take your walks round the polite world, and see how great the disproportion is of *men* than of *women*, who are *daring* in wickedness. Without entering into the *causes* of this, if it be so, do not reproach women.—You despair of success, as if *truth* were too coarse for a female digestion: this is a pretty conceit, but there is no sense in it, if taken as a general rule. It may be just so far as regards an ill manner'd way of introducing truth.—A woman, who is yet in the meridian of her charms, surrounded by all the blandishments of fortune, and the gay appendages of great affluence, may be reluctant to receive a guest, obtruded on her with frowns and reproaches.—But if this heaven-born visitor is usher'd in, attired in all her native charms, and genuine simplicity, you may be confident, she will find at least a *polite reception*; and as surely as the sparks fly upward, she, to whom truth is unwelcome to-day, will be glad to receive it to-morrow. Ill health, or disappointments; the loss of parents, or of children, or of friends; the weakness of injudicious love, or the wickedness of disgust and hatred; the in-
justice

justice of some, or the insolence of others, evils as common as the light, are so many lessons of humiliation, which none but fools can avoid learning.

Be therefore *gentle*, and carry this maxim in your mind, that in the same sense as the *first*, *second*, and *third* rule in oratory, is *action*, in our intercourse with women, it is *civility*. True politeness, is but humanity refined, and adapted to the common rules of life; and the civility I allude to, will flow from such a sensibility of female charms, as men of sentiment are always supposed to feel. The ascendancy women acquire by their very weakness and dependance on us for protection, and the exercise of virtue set in the most amiable point of view, rivets the obligation to that kind of treatment, we call civility.—Hence you may conclude, that as it is a more easy task to flatter a woman into vice by concealing the deformity of it, than by telling the truth; so you may also flatter her into a love of virtue, without thundering out anathemas. Alarm her fears, or elevate her hopes, but by all means avoid the imputation of incivility.

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In considering the different dispositions which characterises the sexes, if we go so far back as our first great ancestors, and the account of the fall recorded in the sacred writings, which of the two shall we most complain of? The woman, I presume, was captivated by an appearance charming in her eye, not a serpent, as vulgarly imagined. The devil in this disguise reasoned speciously, the fruit was beautiful to behold, and the taste delicious. She saw, she heard, she tasted, and was undone: it so enchanted her for a while, that she did not see her ruin. On the other hand, our great progenitor, as Milton beautifully imagines, and as reason leads us to think,

“ ——— *was not deceived,*

“ *But fondly overcome by female charm.*

Thus we may presume a thousand millions of men have erred since that fatal day, in a greater or less degree, with *opened eyes*, against the dictates of their own judgment. Can *we* then boast of so great a *superiority*?

From this sad story we may indeed learn, that wholesome restriction of females, directed

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by

by reason, and mixed with tenderness, such as shall not seem to violate any freedom common to rational creatures, or none but what is in great danger of being abused, is necessary to the virtuous harmony of life; and happy were it if our *daughters* were better instructed in the proper use of the influence which God has given them; and our *sons* taught a more inflexible adherence to the *dictates* of their *reason*, and the *precepts* of their *religion*, in their commerce with the female world.

Now, Sir, what would you say if a poor lady were told by some comely polite young man, richly attired, and his discourse adorned with all the specious arguments of a virtuous intention; what would you say if he addressed her in these terms? “ There *can* be no harm, Ma-
 “ dam, in melodious sounds, which, of all the
 “ objects of sense, has the least power to cor-
 “ rupt the heart. It is far better than discourse,
 “ which is too often directed to the injury of
 “ our neighbour. It is also an amusement
 “ more innocent than *cards*, as these often
 “ rouse the more turbulent and malevolent
 “ passions, and are the less proper for Sunday.

“ There is likewise no *public entertainment* on
 “ Sunday; and *having nothing to do*, time it-
 “ self, you know, is *insupportable*. I am sure
 “ all the world must acknowledge, as there
 “ is nothing immoral in music, but quite the
 “ reverse, the more sanctified the day, the
 “ more holy the deed.—Pardon me, Madam!
 “ —I should think myself the most unhappy
 “ of mankind, to differ with you in opinion.”
 Did the fallen angel reason more persuasively,
 when his flattery disarmed poor Eve, as Mil-
 ton finely expresses it ?

“ *Nor arm those looks, that heaven of mildness,*
 “ *To kill me with disdain.*

And yet, if a husband, a father, a brother, or
 a friend, does not point out the evil tendency
 of such a practice, a lady may very inno-
 cently, as to her intention, be guilty of intro-
 ducing a custom pernicious to religion and civil
 government.

Consider what I have said; and when you
 have made a proficiency in this study, and re-
 solve to practise the rules here laid down, you
 have my full permission to expostulate with

the ladies and gentlemen present at these entertainments (I believe the number of each sex is near equal) who are the objects of your solicitude and christian care. You may then remind them of the evils they are inadvertently falling into.

As to the ladies, who take the lead, I have very good reason to believe they have the most upright intentions, and are in themselves some of the most amiable women in the world. If any of them should be short-sighted, and not perceive the tendency of their conduct, or be over-ruled by others, and you are bent on expostulating *with them, and with those whom they are ambitious of obliging*, you see what sentiments occur to my mind on the occasion. One thought leads to another; and if you manage skilfully, you may draw several important lessons from an event which in one view seems *trifling*, and no doubt will be thought so by the generality of the gay world, tho' in another it is of great moment.

Adieu.

L E T T E R

LETTER III.

IN the bustle of the times, when it is so fashionable for every man to be deeply read in the laws of his country, try, my friend, if you can induce us to examine a little into the laws and institutes of the New Testament, which are, I apprehend, more intelligible, and still more interesting to us. But in the execution of this business, let me repeat to you, not to turn *Cynic*, for you will certainly depreciate your subject if you do. Reason with all the persuasive eloquence that humanity inspires; support your opinion with sentiments of religion, devoid of every passion but that sorrow which characterises christianity: but go no further. Whatever exceeds this, has so much the air of enthusiasm, that, reason ever so well, you will hardly succeed in the attempt.

Do all you can, those who are impatient of all restraint which check their ardor for amusement, will still say, your animadversions are
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the produce of some warm-brained pietist or illiberal poor man, *who thinks we should do nothing but pray*. This you must expect. But tell them in return, to consider how mankind impose on themselves; how often, being short-sighted, others who *see well* appear to be *blind*. Who but a serious man should remind others of serious things?—*You feel what you are with all your sins and imperfections on your head, and are sensible of your approaches to the grave*: yet were you to *rise* from the grave, you could not, according to the natural freedom of the mind, do more than *tell others what they should be*.—Tho' all the distinctions of sex, age, and worldly condition, are so *very trifling* in the great view of life, that the wisest cannot tell what a single day will bring forth; yet it is to little purpose to say this, if you have no audients.

If the *fairest* as well as the *foulest* part of the intelligent creation must one day account for all their actions, it would be a pity that any of them should be even of an ambiguous nature. We are too sure that some passion or other is ever ready to ensnare, if we do not
keep

keep upon the watch. Such pursuits as these are apt to grow into passions, and

“ *The ruling passion, be it what it will,*

“ *The ruling passion governs reason still.*

Happy we are in proportion as this passion co-operates with reason, and when its object is an unwearied application to the duties of religion and humanity. It is then we are carried on by a sacred impulsive fire, which, without flaming to the height of enthusiasm, enables us to march on undaunted to the wheel or stake. In the mean time, to err by vain conceits, where the object is but *mere amusement*, which may be enjoyed at *proper* times and seasons, is a kind of violence on nature: it is the suicide of reason.

To bring these remarks home to your subject, and to my own heart, I am steady in opinion, that in whatever degree the sabbath day is violated, in the same proportion we may prepare to bid farewell to religion. And the more open this violation is committed, the *less hypocrisy* indeed, but not the *less danger*: and let the sense of religion be lost, and the politest
nations

nations upon earth will soon become savages. What signify all the arts and refinements of life? they will be only as the cleanliness and ingenuity of some kinds of brutes, but can neither support a temporal government, nor lead us to the everlasting joys of immortality.

What the poet says of religion in general, as applicable to the *christian* world, seems to depend very much on the observance of the sabbath :

“ *Look round how providence bestows on all*
 “ *Sunshine and rain to bless the fruitful year,*
 “ *On diff'rent nations, all of diff'rent faiths,*
 “ *And (tho' by several names and titles worship'd)*
 “ *Heaven takes the various tribute of their praise;*
 “ *Since all agree to own, at least to mean,*
 “ *One best, one greatest only Lord of all.*

Alas! should we long *own a God*, were it not for the appointed season for the *worship* of him? And what *tribute of praise* should we offer to the great author of nature, or how acknowledge his *goodness* or his *greatness*, if it were not for the return of the sabbath day?

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What you say of polite conversation being at a very low ebb, with regard to the propriety of religious admonition, is, I humbly apprehend, one proof of the consistency of what I now advance. For, whether through absence of thought, or deficiency of understanding, want of charity, or defect in zeal; be the cause what it may, you are to suffer your acquaintance or your most loved friend to perish, rather than tell him, he trespasses on the laws of God. To be gay, agreeable, and in the fashion, are in general esteemed as much beyond *good* sense and religion, as riches are valued more than wisdom, or grandeur surpasses innocence of life. There is a false delicacy which intimidates and over-rules us even in the most tender relations; the father and son, the husband and wife, the brother and sister, are not exempt: not so much, because the forces of the mind will not bear the touch, as vulgarly imagined, but that it is not the *fashion* to talk as if we had any souls, or any thing at stake beyond the *present life*. The momentous concerns of eternity are not to be mentioned in polite company, or only touch'd in such a man-

ner as to lull us into security. We are social enough in things of little moment, but the important benefits of society, with regard to the immortality of the soul, are most strangely restricted. The reason is, *we do not allow ourselves time to think of this matter ; and how should we learn to talk of it ?*

I am most sincerely yours.

LETTER

L E T T E R IV.

THE more I consider your letter, the more I am persuaded of the great truths it contains. It is not to be conceived that the youthful part of these modern assemblies, are acquainted how much *infidelity* abounds, nor consequently are aware how any new custom of this kind, *were it continued*, can have a tendency to promote or confirm such infidelity. Having the purest intentions themselves, they can hardly form any idea of danger or reproach, either from the present or future times. Being countenanced by persons of the highest rank and character, is a happy circumstance, where a thing is unexceptionably good, but equally mischievous, whenever the contrary happens.

If we consider but a moment what life is, and how much mankind are governed by *custom*; if we are sensible that the main prop of religion is the observance of the *sabbath-*

day, we shall tremble at the thought of adopting a custom, which in its nature has any tendency to weaken that prop.

It is not sufficient that an example be agreeable to reason, and the word of God; if it does not receive a sanction from *custom*, it will never acquire the reverence of a law. So on the contrary, let any practice be once adopted as a custom, however bad in its tendency, who can tell where it will stop? Human laws cannot reach every kind of evil. Legislators cannot be attentive to offences, till they become very injurious. Custom, unsupported by reason, is the law of fools; but mankind being much inclined to folly, where there is no law, custom makes one, in *foolish* things, as well as in *wise* ones.

The sabbath-day is, in many respects, guarded by the civil magistrate; and it is a question, if his authority would not be exercised, were the same entertainments brought into use in low life. A porter carrying a musical instrument in the streets on the sabbath-day, is as subject to be apprehended and carried before a magistrate, as if he had carried a box of
cloathes,

cloathes, or the carcase of a sheep; necessity might be pleaded for this trespass in the last instance, which it could not be in the former.

If crowded musical entertainments were to take place on sundays, though we may call them *private*, they differ but little from those which are *public*; and there is ingenuity enough in this great town, to establish a meeting of the same nature, on lucrative principles. If the legislator will permit of it, there can be no doubt of such an establishment. But surely they will not *permit*; and that which is not *permitted* in this sense, is *prohibited*. And how would it stand recorded in story, if persons of distinguished characters for politeness, humanity, piety, most amiable in themselves, and sincere lovers of their country, continued any practice, until the law of the land was called in to restrain it?

Among the lower classes of mankind, *sabbath breaking* is generally acknowledged as the inlet to all the misfortunes incident to their station. And it is very obvious that the love of what they esteem *amusement*, is what they complain of as the primary cause of the calamities

ties they bring on themselves.—No comparison, in this case, can be drawn but from analogy; yet the example, tho' in appearance remote, may easily lay the foundation of misfortunes to the lower ranks. For, if our common people, who are so *daring* in all their pursuits, and so frequently violate our laws, in despite of the gallows, are not awed by the fear of God, they will not fear the laws of the land; they will not be subject to any controul.—And if persons in the highest rank of life adopt certain customs, not generally known amongst us, under a notion of freedom of sentiment, becoming their station, or *allowable* to it, the vulgar will be as *free as they*, though in a more offensive and dangerous manner.

Thus the restraint, with regard to a *good old custom*, of abstaining from certain diversions on the sabbath-day, will be discarded, as mere superstition; and what we are to expect will follow next, I leave the judicious to determine.

With respect to our customs and opinions, of what is right or expedient, in this particular of our amusements, can it be imagined, but

that there are among those who never touch a *card on a sunday*, as judicious, intelligent, polite persons, as those who play? And what is the difference? The first are well apprized of the *honest prejudices* of the common people; and knowing from experience, that abstinence from this particular amusement, has a wonderful tendency to support the distinction in question, they *refrain*. The *last*, either indifferent as to the offence they give, and so far the worse subjects; or desirous to throw off all restraint of this kind, as *no evil*; or ambitious of reserving this privilege to themselves, they shew the way to the common people to do the very same thing. I believe, many condemn themselves, whilst they play, not as a *real offence in itself*, but as they know it to be offensive to the *common people*, towards whom we must always cast our eyes, or we shall make bad politicians.

Let *sundays-card-players*, in this *protestant land*, see this argument in what light they please, and make what defence they can. If they mean that it is not necessary the peasant should be a *metaphysician*, I grant it: neither is
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it necessary any one, not a teacher of the gospel, should be deep in the science of theology; but does it follow, that it is not necessary the peasant should *keep holy the sabbath-day*, keep it *in the way he thinks it ought to be kept*? So long as he does nothing immoral, his religion must be estimated by the *purity* of his *intentions*, and the *strictness* of his obedience.—Thus we see how dangerous and impolitic those refinements are, which have no tendency to do *good*, and may do *evil*.

Why should not *theatrical entertainments* be countenanced among us, *on the sabbath-day*, as they are amongst the papists? Some of our representations are not only *innocent*, but *instructive*; the reason is plain. We have a full toleration in *opinion*, and if our conduct is not repugnant to any known law, we are left *free* also as to *practice*; whereas the papists are confined in both: take away the restraint of the law from *us*; open a door for us to do as we please, and *liberty being common to all*, how shall we shut it again? We shall follow a popish custom, and at the same time cry out against *ecclesiastical power and popish tyranny*.

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We must *keep ourselves* in awe upon some principle or other ; and human laws do not reach all the exigencies of the *present* life, much less can they take in a *future* state.

The papists generally think of religion as of a task to be performed : *you* teach us to consider it as *purity of heart, and consistency of conduct*. *We* build on no other foundation than the law contained in the New Testament ; *they* on the mandates of the *pope*, or some other jurisdiction no less arbitrary, and absurd. Consequently every deviation from *good customs* once established, is peculiarly dangerous to us. It is hardly 270 years since we abolished many customs and opinions, which cut the roots of liberty, and poisoned the pure fountain of religion.

There needs no evidence, my friend, to prove, that every *example* which flatters the levity or corruption of the heart, bids fair to be followed, be it ever so absurd : and as *wise* and *free* as we are, this nation is under the arbitrary dominion of a humor, we call *fashion*, which, though we change our lord as often as

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we change the cut of our cloathes, we are still subservient to it.

For the same reason, if musical entertainments, or any other of the same kind, were to become fashionable on sundays, we should, so long as it lasted, be *enslaved* to it. I fear the preparation of some as guest, and of others to receive company, would create such a *noisy bustle* in this poor town, that the incense of prayer would not be offered up to heaven on that day, with any great attention by the votaries of music. It would be well if the fine world had time to go to church *once in the day*: but as to sitting at home to *think*, to *commune with their own hearts in their chamber*, and *be still*; it seems to be a precept already erased from the *splendid* records of modern times. Our *visitings* alone on that day, engross many hours: only the pious few lay themselves under a restraint. Will the possession of a good office, the inheritance of a good estate, or the being a *connoisseur* in music, be accepted hereafter as an excuse for *thoughtlessness*?

In the mean time, if it is *necessary* that our *servants* should learn the difference between man that is immortal, and the beast that perishes, we must engage them to read the scriptures, that they may know what they *are*, and what they *are not to do*, to be saved. They are at present full as wicked as their masters; some of them a great deal more so: and if they meditate at all, it is on a *sunday*. How then can we answer it, to see them negligent on that day? But if by any new modes of entertainment we make it *more difficult* for them to be attentive on that day, we shall stand so much the *more inexcusable*, with regard both to *precept and example*.

It is true that whether master or servant,
 “ persons who, by their habitual practice of
 “ virtue, preserve constantly in their minds a
 “ sense of God and religion in all the actions
 “ of their lives, may be truly said, in the
 “ christian sense, to keep a perpetual sabbath.”
 But, to how few is this applicable? How deficient the best of us are, every man’s own heart must inform him. But considering how miserably inattentive the major part of the do-

metics in these great cities are, with regard to the duties of religion, it may be deemed one of the great misfortunes of the times. If we mean to act as faithful servants to our great Lord and master, we must superintend their moral and religious conduct, as a father should be watchful of his children, though not exactly in the same manner.

The general cast of our thoughts, at this time, being so different from this rule, it seems to be one fruitful source of the irreligion that abounds. Mutual confidence and domestic harmony can arise only from a due esteem of the virtues of servants, and the correction of their vices. If a servant behaves irreligiously and impenitently, you may discharge him with disgrace; and if we were really to practise this rule, not capriciously, but on a steady principle, we should soon be relieved, or compelled to turn our complaints against our own breast, for being omiffive in *our* duty, instead of complaining of *their* trespasses. If we instructed them at the earliest period of life, instead of their being carried away by a current of immorality, and ignorance of religious duties, they might learn even from a
reverence

reverence for the *sabbath-day*, what solid comforts, and joyful hopes, religion provides for mankind. This would be an entertainment worthy of those to whom heaven has been most indulgent, whether they abound in understanding, riches, or virtue.

It must therefore appear in this point of view, that as the fear of God is the only solid basis of quiet government upon earth, to plead that there is *no harm in grand numerous meetings on sundays*, cannot be satisfactory.

There is another motive which occurs to me relating to the *honor* of our country. You say, many foreigners of the romish church are admitted to these musical meetings of *connoisseurs*. Whatever politeness may be due to them as strangers and persons of distinction, I should be truly sorry, if the dignity or piety of any lady in this land were rendered subservient to the amusement of strangers. It was once said by an ancient *Roman*, of the voluptuous Epicurean philosophy, that he wished the *enemies of Rome* might follow it. Politically considered, we may now wish that the *friends of Rome*, or *enemies of the British empire*, may follow

follow a *popish* custom on sundays, not ourselves. Such entertainments can never make us the *better* or the *braver* people. True piety, and the contempt of death, walk hand in hand. And be satisfied, my friend, that good sense and virtue will set all matters right. Tho' I discant so amply, there needs but a word to the wise.—I am greatly mistaken, if *good* does not arise from the *evil* in question. Those who think well, will not only correct themselves in this instance, *when they pass the true mark*, but influence others also who are faulty. If such as do not *think well*, should overlook or reject your animadversions, you must take your chance in common with all other divines and philosophers, from *Noah* down to this day.

I am very much yours.

LETTER

L E T T E R V.

YOU complain of the levity of the times, not on the sabbath day only, but on all other days.—Look into the records of time, and you will not find any age in which a fantastical humor did not prevail amongst great numbers of people. Every event has its effect, or every effect has its cause ; and events hang together in a chain. *Poverty* naturally creates *reflection*, whilst it obliges men to live in a collected manner. Examples of piety operate on many who are not poor, and thus virtue may shine forth at some periods more than at others, diffusing a light to guide us into the paths of happiness. A small degree of experience in the present times must convince us, that *mediocrity* of fortune, with the same knowledge of men and things, bids fairer to secure to us a rational and virtuous life, than *great abundance* : for in fact those who labor hard for that abundance, and are frequently indulged

dulged with it, do often pervert their own ways, and the ways of others, more than they probably would if they were in an humbler condition, with respect to what is commonly called the *good things* of this world.

War, which has impoverished our state, has enriched many individuals; *commerce* many more: and happy it is that they are enriched, that the state may ultimately avail itself of the means of its own support, on great emergencies; otherwise this splendid fabric, as if it had subsisted by enchantment, might be hurled into ruin, and dissolved.

In the mean time, example is so prevalent with regard to external glitter, appearance, and all the arts and refinements of dissipation, that many who are not rich, as well as numbers that are, join in one grand procession to the *temple of vanity*. All within a certain sphere, is in a blaze of magnificence, particularly in our great cities; but it prevails most in this grand collection of shew and opulence.

Comfort yourself; we shall not be *all* undone on this account; *plenty* is not universal. You need but take a walk to see what business there

there is to be done, to *guide* and *direct* the *poor*, and ease them of that load of misery which time and chance creates, or the *idleness* of some, and the *wickedness* of others, occasions.

All who act as if they were rich, are not so. The nerves of property are in general extended beyond what they will bear; and in proportion as numbers impoverish themselves, by unnecessary expence, the evil will cure itself, tho' the morals of many may be hurt in search of the means of a splendid support: this is a calamity we must bear.

There is also another distant chance of recovery. The same humor which now leads us to as high an expence *as we can go*, being changed by satiety, and a sense of the vanity which attends it, the time may come, when that which is *least* expensive, will be *fashionable*; we may, even in the opinion of the fashionable world, betray a want of taste, when we are extravagant.—Such is the wonderful effect of fashion!

In the mean while, you must not be surprized, that *children* imitate their *parents*, or the young, the aged. Where the affairs of the

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world go smoothly on, and no remarkable chastisement from heaven reaches them, we must expect to see even the aged become undisciplined with respect to those rules of life, which arise from the great *law of consideration*.

In general, we are *all* very poor mortals.— We tire ourselves in the pursuit of objects, which are very far from being commensurate with our natural longings after happiness. Nay, we submit to the meanest drudgery, and hackney ourselves in ways, which have nothing to recommend them, but the countenance of the times. We carry this so far, as, in a literal sense, to go a-begging.

The most affluent of the sons and daughters of plenty, beg from door to door, in absolute distress for the means of disposing of their time, and they part with it frequently for *much less than a song*. The desire of amusement increases with the repetition, and we are urged by an insatiable appetite for that, to which novelty alone gives any pleasing sensations. Thus we seek for food for the fancy, and often find poison to the heart and understanding. Is our present mode of living such as does honor
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nor to creatures, made but a little lower than the angels, and form'd with such vast abilities for happiness?—If happiness is the reward of our improvement of the time allotted us, and we seek to waste and squander away that very time, shall we find the object we seek for? If

“ *We have a business that requires an age,*
 “ *And but a moment to perform it in :*

If the *belief* of the immortality of the soul does not awaken us from this dream of amusement, so as to give this thought its *due* consideration, what can do it? You may lament the prevailing habits of our lives; but how will this avail to the *amendment* of them?

Nothing can exhibit a stronger proof of our inability to support ourselves on our own stock of reflection, than the impatient desire of being continually in a *crowd*. The same cause which renders a common soldier or a common sailor thoughtless and *dissolute*, operates on persons of the highest rank. With some change of circumstances, the great and little vulgar are both the same, and both are *what they are*,

because they are very ill instructed in matters of the greatest moment, and act so much in a *crowd*.

There is something more absurd and contradictory in our practice, in this period of politeness, than in any other that I can find recorded in story. We desire to live long, yet we covet to live in a *crowd*, than which nothing can be more injurious to health. The house in which we make our laws, has not room enough. Courts of judicature, to execute judgment and equity, are frequently embarrassed with a *crowd*. Our theatres are continually *crowded*; and what is most difficult to reconcile, *private houses* are often rendered poisonous by the *crowds* assembled in them. We also *crowd* our churches, sometimes to pray, and sometimes to amuse ourselves.

We live in a climate where heat and cold, moist and dry air, follow in a quick rotation; and by our present mode of living, in spite of many voluptuous conveniencies, we often contract consumptions, gouts, and fevers; and in general as we live so we die. There is no reason to expect

pect any mighty change, even when *death* approaches with an uplifted dart. How does this demonstrate a true taste or knowledge of living?—To desire to live long, and yet to putrify the air we breathe, is a paradox. But it is of the same kind as the desire to be at our ease, and yet coveting to go where we are morally certain we shall not have room to sit or walk, nor even space to stand commodiously. It was once deemed a high incivility to receive a guest, and not ask him to sit down. We now receive a hundred, and give up this part of politeness as impracticable.

What a strange combination of ideas! To suffer such inconveniencies oneself, and to create them to others, only to have it said, *her Grace had a vast assembly last night!* This is the little ambition of the times. Can a lady, who has *two hundred* acquaintance, at a *rout*, calculate that a quarter of the company interest themselves for her welfare, or that half a quarter of those who may survive her, will make the offering of a single sigh at her tomb?—This is not denied: but for the very reason that we are so inconsiderate as to delight in a *crowd*, we
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have also no powers of mind beyond the present moment, determined as we are, to offer up our precious time as a barbarous sacrifice to this fantastic idol, *a crowd*. Are these *necessary evils*? Do they prevent greater misfortunes? If they do, we may justly lament our situation as extremely unfortunate.

Abstracted from our religious views of things, how does this passion operate in the views of good policy? We are unhappily reduced to *this dilemma*. If our young women are hid from the world in any degree, in the eastern stile, they are hardly known to have any existence at all; for few look into the happy silent retreats of virtue, or suppose there are any such retreats. If they press on the sight, according to the prevailing custom, they not only acquire wandering undomestic habits, but also become cheap in men's eyes with respect to their personal charms. And what is the commerce of visitings reduced to? Where no real affection or esteem exists, it is a farce to teach young persons how to wear *two faces*, and use *double words*; or, in other terms, to be as much inclined to *trifling as their parents, more backney'd in the world, too often are*.

In the mean while, the great business of alliances, on which the happiness of individuals, and the welfare of our country so much depend, is not, as you say, totally neglected, for numbers marry; but it is true that numbers, for this very reason, *do not* marry. Marriage amongst the highest and middle ranks is much neglected, and rather arises from motives of interest than love. Parties are more frequently jumbled together by the coincidence of fortune and convenience, fear of living too long unmarried, on the part of the woman, or the being *tired* of celibacy, on the part of the man, than meeting from pure motives of affection. Without the least exaggeration, instances are so frequent of persons continuing single, that one cannot but wish for a change of our customs and manners, where there no other reason for it than this.

A *crowd* confuses all our ideas. The flutter of the spirits, especially of *young* people, whilst things are yet new and striking, makes them so far lose sight of the pleasures of society, that they cannot wish for the conversation of one, when they are used to the company

pany of one hundred : this is equal in both sexes, and but few seem qualified to entertain the sentiments, or learn the language of honest love or true friendship.

It is thus young persons also deceive themselves, by thinking nothing is worthy their care, but what is *glittering* or *transporting* ; and being dazzled by a false fire, pursue the phantom *pleasure*, not the real objects of their *happiness*.

We must not suppose that any degree of *austerity* will be relished, however necessary it may be : we must leave this consideration. But there is a medium which reason points out, and which is seldom learnt *against the force and power of custom*.

There is a virtue in deploring the evils of life, and “ in lending a tear to misery,” in whatever shape it appears, when we can do no more.—*He*, who had all nature at command, often wept.—*What shall we do ?*—But there are many evils, some of so *ambiguous*, some of so *complex* a nature, that circumstances only render them great or little. Thus it frequently becomes difficult to distinguish, or know
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how to admonish. As many evils amongst us create sorrow, many excite laughter. If you aspire at that *angelic* equanimity, which is free of the ardor and levity of youth, the *cynical* coldness of advanced years, and the vanity of a fruitless vexation of spirit, you may venture to say with the poet :

- “ *Democritus, dear droll, return to earth,*
 “ *And with thy humor glut our mirth.*
 “ *Sad Heraclitus, serious wretch, return,*
 “ *And for our follies teach us all to mourn.*
 “ *Betwixt you both I unconcern'd stand by ;*
 “ *Hurt can I laugh, and guiltless need I cry.*

Guiltless!—I dare say you are, as to intention: but have you not many flaws, many black spots in your heart?—Wash them out if you can, and let not your zeal transport you so far, as to exhibit a wretched proof of your own weakness or presumption.—Do your best, and leave the event to providence. Whilst your ambition is not of this world, you cannot trespass by consulting your own interest too much, in those distinctions, and generous rules of life, which show how true self-love and so-

cial are really the same, and in what manner ;
as *Pope* has finely expressed it,

“ *Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace,*
“ *Our country next, and next all human race.*
“ *Wide and still wide th’ o’erflowing of his mind*
“ *Takes every creature in of every kind.*
“ *Earth smiles around with boundless bounty blest,*
“ *And heaven beholds its image in his breast.”*

Let your object be the *poor* or *rich* ; the *young*,
or *aged* ; the *wise* or *foolish* ; consider man-
kind as they are. Bear and forbear : submit
or oppose, as reason and religion dictate.

“ *Give me the man that is not passion’s slave,*
“ *And I will bind him to my heart.*

This is beautifully said of the preference due
to candor, piety, resolution, and sense ; but if you
expect to find such a man in the pure abstract,
you may keep your heart very much disengaged.
Things are in a mixed state : there are many
intricacies and windings in life ; and if all other
men were perfect, *you being not so*, could not
be a competent judge of them. Though the
consciousness of endeavoring to act right, is a
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perpetual feast, some anxious moments will attend you. The *cast* of your thoughts will also give a tincture to objects. Thus it happens that some men see things in too dark, some in too bright a view.—*Few see them as they are.*

In whatever character we examine the affairs of human life, *man* may be considered in some analogical views, as a *time-keeper*, not free of imperfections. So far as intellectual and mechanical powers can be compared, it is by the use of his *time*, the *longitude and latitude* of all his thoughts, words, and actions, are to be determined. He is a *machine*, not as the materialists fondly imagine (if there are such fools in the intellectual world) but an admirable piece of divine workmanship, whose principle of motion and regulator is reason and religion, and the perfection it is capable of in its motion, is the *rational hope of a joyful immortality*. The central point on which the whole is moved, in the latitudes where *christianity* is known, is the revelation of the will of the great architect and contriver of this wonderful work. To this idea we may join the necessity of a certain *degree of warmth*, not

rising to the height of *enthusiasm*, but the power without which it never moves with that energy, which constitutes the least imperfect state it can be put in ; the extremes of *hot* or *cold* being equally pernicious to its true vibration or equality of time-keeping.

Nothing can be more demonstrable, than that there is a certain *mediocrity*, which constitutes the essence of all the virtue man is capable of. Some from their construction are apt to go too fast, and many more, too slow. Few consider their own defects so as to observe attentively, *when* it is they go too fast or too slow. But in this enquiry it is very obvious, that when we have exerted all our powers, we never can comprehend all the secret springs and movements, which actuate this amazing piece of workmanship. We know however sufficiently to *set* it near the *true time*, so near as to entertain *hopes* of the reward which is promised for its utility, and to keep us many degrees above *despair*.

Every man, who has made *observation* on himself and others, who has allowed himself *time* to contemplate his own frame, with all
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the various hopes and fears, which *settle* or *fluctuate* in his breast, will find this analogy to have some foundation.

Upon this principle we may also observe, that the warmth, which is supposed necessary to its regular motion, is in itself subject to extremes. The true state of it seems to approach the full maturity of *reason*, *assisted by the passions*; the corrupted state, or decline, is, the *passions let loose to destroy reason*: in other words, this defect is *impiety*, or *enthusiasm*, or *madness*.

For want of this obvious *distinction*, it is sometimes thought, even by reasoning men, that without a degree of *enthusiasm*, we never arrive to any height in science, or in war, in friendship, or in love, in religion, or attention to the sister of religion, *humanity*. For want of language, or deficiency of *ideas*, we fall into gross absurdities, and erroneous judgments. The highest virtues and the greatest honor to human nature, may through this defect appear *vicious* and *disgraceful*.

After all our enquiries, and the most arduous struggles of the human heart, in quest
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of that perfection, the natural ambition of the soul aspires at, the sum and substance of life, and death, and judgment; the hopes of heaven and the fears of hell; into what can they be all *resolved*, but *the love of God, and the love of man*? This is the law and the prophets, the saints, the bleeding martyrs, the light diffused by the glorious appearance of the sun of righteousness in the gospel of Christ. On this great principle we behold the Son of God himself agonizing on the cross, his blood streaming from his wounds, imploring his Father, the great parent of mankind, to forgive those, *who knew not what they did*; who saw things reflected through a false mirror; and whose want of candor or of judgment, or of purity of heart, had involved them in that dreadful calamity of slaying the Lord of life.

Here then we see what qualification is necessary to *employ every faculty of the soul*, recall our *wandering* thoughts, and recover us to such a true sense of our condition, that we *may learn what to do with our time*. It is but short at best, and its duration so uncertain, that of all the wonders of the world the greatest is, that
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we do not prize it more ; that we build upon an hour to come, to do any any thing we ought to do, and which can be done at the present moment. This is a complaint as old as philosophy or religion, and will probably continue to be such : yet not the less miserable he, who neglects his everlasting obligations, or the less happy he who attends to them, even to

*“ That business, which, as we follow, or despise,
 “ The eldest is a fool, the youngest wise.*

Adieu, my dear friend.

LETTER

L E T T E R VI.

W HATEVER may be the power of *custom*, truth and right reason will prevail. It must be so in the final issue of things.

I plead for the sanctity of *time* and the sabbath ; yet, as an advocate for *music*, I would *try my cause* to the utmost, and allow of every indulgence that is safe and proper. As the use of music is allowed in our churches, may we not use it in our houses too, and still preserve the sabbath inviolate ? Must the harmonious sounds which fill the soul with divine rapture, be renounced on the *sabbath day* ? Is not such music the more proper, for the very reason that it is the *sabbath* ?

It would indeed be much happier for us all, I will not say if we *could*, but if we *would* learn how to entertain ourselves at home on that day, whether *with* the help of music or *without*. The pleasures of music, in domestic life, are confined but to a few, even in the polite world ;

and even to these, of how much greater moment is the contemplation of immortality, arising from a due examination of the scriptures? This is a pleasure *more musical than Apollo's lyre.*

Let us however indulge ourselves in music when we *can*: when it is not subject to abuse, nor gives offence, there can be no harm:

“ *For man may justly tuneful strains admire,*
 “ *His soul is music, and his breast a lyre;*
 “ *A lyre, which while its various notes agree,*
 “ *Enjoys the sweets of its own harmony.”*

If the sound of music is adapted to sense, and the sense to the praises of the Almighty, we may venture to entertain ourselves in a real *private* manner, *on the sabbath.* But it is the peculiar misfortune of the times, that few persons now understand the meaning of the word *private*: all now is *public*: every thing in the *splendid* world, is in the meridian altitude of one imperial *flutter.* And so sure as great companies create dissipation, we cannot enter into the recesses of our own hearts, far enough to say *we are in private.*

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Tho' it is in the power of harmony to rouse the languid soul, and warm it with a heavenly flame, there must be a proper temper to receive the impression. We *may* receive it, even when surrounded by numbers, as a vast multitude of people may fill the mind with awe and reverence; but in ordinary cases, if we mean to be *collected*, we should be in some degree retired, and at our ease, not tossed in the wide ocean of a modern crowded assembly.

" Music the mighty artist man, can rule,

" As long as it has numbers, be a soul."

But it is presumed that no happy operation can be performed whilst his spirit is disquieted or discomposed.—*Music* may fire the mind with martial ardor, but it must be when armies are formed in just array and dreadful pomp, not in the noise and tumult of a battle.—*Music* can warm the breast with a religious zeal, or soothe it into tears of penitence,

" As David's lyre did Saul's wild rage control,

" And tune the harsh disorders of his soul."

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But if the flutter of a crowd blunts the edge of those fine sensations which constitute the pleasure, how, under such circumstances, can we

“ *Learn to tune and harmonize the mind,*

“ *Teach ev'ry thought within its bounds to roll,*

“ *And keep the equal measure of the soul?*”

It is true this inconvenience of crowded meetings might with much ease be rectified, if we pleased. It were happy there were no other evil attending our musical passion.—*Music*, as well as poetry and painting, are often employed for mean purposes, or such as are disgraceful to human nature. Tho' it derives its origin from the pure fountain of celestial harmony, the stream may be polluted, *Man is corrupt*, and all things relating to his use and service may be corrupted. Let us not therefore neglect the apparent end and design of providence, but contemplate the works of the *supreme composer*, by the *effects* as well as the *principles* of science. It is justly observed by a great artist *, *in honor of music*, that

* Mr. Avison, in his *Musical Expression*.

“ a full chord struck, or a beautiful succession
 “ of single sounds produced, is no less ravish-
 “ ing to the ear than just symmetry or exquisite
 “ colours to the eye.” It is not, I apprehend,
 that we are taken captive by the ear; but as
 an organ conveying ideas of order and perfec-
 tion, it challenges a right to affect the high-
 est faculties of the soul; and if it really does
 affect them, there can be no doubt concerning
 the intention of him who made us what we
 are.

It is also observed, that great musicians
 are frequently, not always, remarkable *good*
 people, or remarkable *bad* ones. The rea-
 son, I apprehend, is, that strong imaginations
 and weak judgments sometimes go toge-
 ther; and music being a science depending
 chiefly on the *imagination*, as this faculty of
 the soul is chastised, or left without control,
 we are naturally led to employ it to the most
 generous purposes, and the honor of God, or
 perversely deviate into folly, and render it in-
 strumental to estrange our hearts from our
 Maker.

Such

Such is my notion of music; whilst I feel no devotion comparable to that which is excited by the force of harmony, at once to elevate my fancy, employ my understanding, and warm my heart with the subject-matter of it.

Upon this principle, I am led to think, that the stronger motive arises for women of virtue, who have great pleasure in music, to adapt it as much as possible to the praises of God. “The capacity of receiving pleasure from musical sounds,” says the same ingenious author, “is in fact a peculiar and internal sense; but of a much more refined nature than the external senses: for in the pleasures arising from our internal sense of harmony, there is no prior uneasiness necessary, in order to our tasting them in their full perfection; neither is the enjoyment of them attended with languor or disgust. It is their peculiar and essential property, to divest the soul of every unquiet passion, to pour in upon the mind a silent and serene joy, beyond the power of words to express, and to fix the heart in a rational, benevolent, and happy tranquillity.”

All

All this may be exactly true in the degree ; but if *ideas* are wanting, I do not conceive the pleasure to be *greater than the power of words can express*. As to languor or satiety, it is recorded of Sir *Isaac Newton*, that he used to say, the *first* act in an *opera* transported him exceedingly ; the *second* he could bear ; but he never pretended to have any pleasure in the *third*.—This is not *against* music, but against the *affectation* of being in raptures for hours together. Human nature is human nature still, tho' we find some exceptions to general experience.

Mr. *Avison* goes on thus. “ The force of
 “ found in alarming the passions is prodigious.
 “ Thus the noise of thunder, the shouts of
 “ war, the uproar of an enraged ocean, strike
 “ us with terror : so again there are certain
 “ sounds natural to joy, others to grief or despondency, others to tenderness and love ;
 “ and by hearing these, we naturally sympathize with those who either enjoy or suffer.
 “ And thus, by the musician's art, we are
 “ often carried into the fury of a battle, or a
 “ tempest ; we are by turns elated with joy,
 “ or

“ or sunk in pleasing sorrow ; roused to courage, or quelled by grateful terrors ; melted into pity, tenderness and love, or transported to the regions of bliss in an extasy of divine praise.”

Admirably said, and strictly true ! Thus music may be considered as creating an *additional sense*, or intellectual endowment. But as being one of the delicate accomplishments, it is most to be esteemed in *women*, and in women of fortune and polite education ; for others can hardly find time to apply to it. Music not only enlarges their ideas, but furnishes an employment for the mind, where the pleasures of the field cannot consistently be enjoyed. It also serves, in some instances, to keep *evil spirits* the more at arms-length. Where the thoughts are not engrossed in the means of obtaining *daily bread*, there must be *other means* provided, not the less pleasing because they are *innocent*. At the same time I must add, with all due respect to the female world, and not less to my subject, that it seems to be no unlucky circumstance to the man to whose lot the most accomplished young lady-musician

musician may fall, if she has been also taught the *science of housewifery*, especially if her husband should be of a *true English taste*.

Where music hurts the strength or simplicity of the mind, it is undoubtedly injurious. Mr. *Avifon* says, "every species of musical sound must tend to dispel the malevolent passions, because they are painful; and nourish those which are benevolent, because they are pleasing." I presume he speaks of such real harmony, as there is an aptitude in the mind to receive and relish. So far this remark is for the honor of *human nature*, as well as *music*; for musical sounds are but instruments to touch our ideas. And this remark seems to depreciate all sounds which have not something just or noble for their object.

All nations upon earth love music, though their ideas of harmony differ essentially. People the most barbarous in their manners, even on occasion of human sacrifices, sing, or play on some instrument.

Whatever sound has any affinity with the worship of God, it naturally excites sentiments of religious awe, tho' each individual may apply

ply it mentally to his particular mode of faith, or manner of worship. Solemn silence has sometimes the effect of awful sounds. I have been edified by the silent prostration of a Mahomedan, as well as by the pompous echo of a full anthem in a popish church.—The plain metre of an English psalm sung in tolerable measure, will still assist the heart that is piously inclined; but where grandeur and simplicity unite, as in the case of our *organ music*, when the organ is really good, and touched with propriety, the happy medium discovers itself in the most pleasing manner.

In all ages and all parts of the world, we find much pleasure arise from *sound*, even where there seems to be no *principle of science*; but in this case it still supposes that sense attends it. If it is calculated for motion, as in *dancing*, or for spirit and courage, as in *war*, it has its object. The immediate tendency is understood and relished.

We see different nations have different ideas of harmony, as they differ in language. In *Europe* there is an infinite variety; but as in the whole Christian world there is a similarity

in customs and manners, there is also an affinity in their music. The *Asiatics*, I know, have a taste entirely of a different nature from ours; that of the *Americans* is less cultivated; and the *Africans* differ from them all.

Whilst we contemplate the powers with which the great author of nature has endowed the human soul, we may also consider in how great veneration the heathen world held music. This is deduced from the celebrated story of Orpheus, and the fictions of antiquity.

“ *I’ve read how things inanimate have mov’d,*
 “ *And as with living souls have been inform’d,*
 “ *By magic numbers and persuasive sound.*

But whatever lofty ideas we may form of the enchanting powers of music, whether scientifically considered or not, if we lay aside all affectation or pretension to raptures, merely because it may be *fashionable to be enraptured*, or to devote much time to this amusement; for my own part I am *pleas’d* when I am *contented*; and as pleasure is the pursuit, it seems reasonable to endeavor to be *pleas’d*, or in other words to be *contented*, when one is really amused,
 whether

whether the music be first rate or not. According to the sentiments of the ingenious author, whom I have quoted, I would endeavor to turn music to advantage, with regard to the piety of my mind, as well as my amusement; but let the ideas correspond ever so well with the sounds, if I am not assisted with the words which are sung, I am not *present* with the full powers of my mind. I rather *labor* to affix ideas to the sound. If I have no other ideas than that of harmonious sounds, for that time I abandon sense, and become an idolator of sound, which does not seem to be much for the honor of reason, or good sense. Those who are masters of music, as a science, may talk another language, because they have ideas of principles and rules, of symmetry, order, proportion, and consonancy of parts.

I have often wondered how people who do not lay claim to any knowledge of music, as a science, pretend notwithstanding to keep their attention awake, for two or three hours together, and talk of extatic joys during the whole time. To sit at one's ease in the company of persons whose virtues we honor and admire,

free from the flutter of a great assembly, is joy enough for common mortals. Persons of the finest taste, or in the ardor of youth, may be allowed more active pleasure, *if they can find it*. But the true pleasure of a man must have reason on its side, because he is himself a rational creature; and it is worthy the remark of the keenest satyrift, to see people *suffering pain in* a crowd, when they may enjoy pleasure *out* of it. An intemperate pursuit of pleasure, to the deprivation of ease or happiness, is very little for the honor of taste or rationality.

Nor can we consistently, thro' love of one sister art, give up the other: poetry, with sense, lend to music, as well as borrow powers to charm; and for the same reasons that all nations differ in taste, some sprightly, elegant, sensible *English songs*, I am persuaded, afford more joy to most *English ears*, than all the harmony we import from *Italy*. But it is deemed amongst those who call themselves *polite*, a shame to own this truth. In fact they confess it, or a *Beggars Opera*, or a *Love in a Village*, would not please so long, nor engage
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the attention even of those who frequent Italian operas.

Some Italian masters please almost every ear, even when there is no knowledge of the science: but where only sound and harmony are found, that is, when we do not understand the words, or not distinguish them; or when we are shocked with the little sense they contain; so far the pleasure must diminish as the satiety increases. So I conceive it must be with common men, such as I feel myself to be.

Of all our musical fraternities, none seems to stand upon so firm a basis as the ancient academy *. Here we find the sublime, the harmonious, the humorous and the sprightly, happily disposed or blended, whilst the general taste is for *devotional music*.

In considering the charms of *sound*, compared with those of *sense*, we must give the pre-

* Handell, Purcell, Pepush, Allegri, Crofts, Stefani, Palastrina, Pergolesi, Green; and lately the great Marcello, and some others most esteemed at the Crown and Anchor society, on Thursdays. This society has wisely printed a book with the words of the music they usually perform, for their own particular use.

ference to the *Italian*, as most properly adapted to the *music of Italy*, in the same manner as *our language* is most agreeable to *our own proper taste*. *Dio Omnipotente* has a more melodious cadence than *Almighty God*. But if I should happen not to understand what *Dio Omnipotente* means, there can be no more than melody ; and if we change the phrase, and call it, *O Lord our governor*, or *Father omnipotent*, or *Father supreme*, adapted to sound by the skilful artist, with the advantage of a natural honest inbred *partiality* for *our own language*, united with the pleasures of the understanding, it is the best reason which can be given, to be *contented*, to be *pleased*, to be *edified*. This is done without any force upon nature in forming our taste : for when we acquire all that we aspire at in this art, it cannot avail those who do not get their bread by music in any advantageous view, beyond the mere pleasure of the *connoisseur* in music.

Farewell.

L E T T E R

LETTER VII.

BUT, my friend, if we contemplate the real charms of music, and apply it religiously to the noblest ideas that frail mortality can entertain; yet if we do not turn the current of the *present reigning* passion, as it were to water the adjacent ground, and nourish the branches which grow from it; if nothing but *sonatas, airs, and songs*, will please, we shall soon discharge the *sweet child of fancy, nature's darling, Shakespear; the melodious love-creating Otway, the chaste majestic Rowe. Milton, Addison, and Pope*, with a train of the tuneful tribe, who excel in numbers, happiness of words and sense, may also wing their flight to heaven, in a literal sense, and leave us, as undeserving.

[*shine,*

" Gods! how their thoughts do rise, and soar, and

" Immortal spirit animates each line;

" Each

[crown'd,

" *Each with bright flame, that fires our souls, is*

" *Each has magnificence of sound,*

" *And harmony divine.*

If we consider the power of poetry in recording the deeds of heroes, we may say,

" *The grave can but the dross of him devour,*

" *So small is Death's, so great the Poet's power.*

If the power of good historians is greater still, it shews that superiority of *sense* has a better title to immortality of fame than either poetry, music, or any other art, but as it is accompanied by this *faithful friend* to mankind.

This consideration seems to bring us back to the *sublime poetry*, and sublimer sense contained in the psalms, in our native language, to which we are chiefly obliged to the Hebrew, the ancient language of the chosen people of God. How far then the preference is due, to the music which is most properly adapted to the psalms, will, I presume, appear very obvious.

What numbers of young persons are taught to play on instruments, or *sing* in tune, who
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cannot speak with a proper emphasis, nor in a natural pleasing manner, though it seems to be one of the highest, most *useful*, and most *persuasive* accomplishments in human life. Those who do not speak well, can hardly ever read harmoniously. The reason is plain; *they really are not taught to read*; and like children, catch only the mechanic rules of music. One would imagine the near alliance of *just pronunciation* and *poetry*, joined to *music*, would render each equally common and familiar, and equally pleasing.

On the other hand, for persons of fortune to resign themselves up to poetry or music, is an evil to be lamented. It is said that the great Mr. *Addison* was often thinking of a *rhyme*, when he should have been attending to his dispatches as secretary of state. And I have read of one of the heroes of antiquity, who being in discourse with a *professed fiddler*, told him, "God forbid that you should understand music so well as I do;" intimating, that the duty of persons in eminent stations was of so much superior a nature, that altho' he might indulge himself in music as a diversion,

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it would be a crime in him to consider it as a *profession*, or to spend much time in the study of it, to the prejudice of any thing more intimately connected with his duty to God or society.

As poetical works are so easily come at, and require no other powers than understanding and an ear: as our country can produce so many favorites of Apollo, whose labors have a title to *temporal immortality*, and which may be enjoyed in the most silent retreats, better than in the bustle of a crowd, it would be difficult to reconcile how it comes about that such labors are so little regarded by that part of mankind who profess *taste*, and delight in harmony, if we did not know, that, comparatively speaking, nothing *now* is *pleasing* that is not accompanied by a *crowd*.

We have many books in our language fraught with sentiments of religion, and *moral rules of life*, adorned in all the elegance of fancy, and the effulgent robes of poetry. These rules are much more easily learnt and retained, being in verse, than in prose; and therefore seem to be so much the more worthy our attention.

tention. Young persons might by habit speak and read harmoniously, and at the same time learn the most admirable rules, whilst they promoted, not injured, the cause of music.

In the mean while, I should be glad to know what it is we learn of *Italians*, comparable to the labors of these *poetic personages*, whose memory we revere? *Painting* is not in question; and if we mean to retain amongst us a true *sterling taste in customs and manners, and to be as little italianized as our religion, laws, and liberty* will admit, or our language renders necessary, we must recall our *rambling* thoughts, and fix them on our proper object. *Signior Manzoli* mounting the stage at the Haymarket, would not then appear so much superior to *Signior Lioni* mounting the stage on Tower-hill. As to the ends of amusement, they are both artists in their way; they both *speak Italian* to their *audience*, tho' the latter sometimes honors them with *broken English*, and, as far as I know, cures their diseases. The sound of both is admired; the *auditor* is pleased: so much of life is exhausted; every one is happy to get quit of his time, and, I dare

say, talks loudly in praise of the respective accomplishments of these *Italian gentlemen*.

We do not mean to give up ourselves in full property to Italians. There does not seem to be much to fear from their male fingers; the females of that nation are more dangerous. Perhaps the voluptuous air of *Italy* may soften the minds of our young men of fortune more than our ruder climate, especially when they are *in a state of idleness*. The instances I have known abroad of the infatuation created by Italian singing-women, might induce one to believe there is some wonderful magic in the cadence of Italian words. This humor indeed does not appear to be in fashion now: but lest it should return, it ought to be deemed a reason against our partiality for *Italian music*.

Every fashion has its reign: but as there is nothing new under the sun, the same folly must sometimes appear a second or a third time within half a century. It is within the memory of middle-aged persons, that we were involved in a frenzy of fondness for Italian music. Two succeeding wars made the shrill trumpet's dread alarms sound more sweetly
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than the voice of a *Faranelli*. We may now consider how to profit by peace, and the exercise of gentle arts ; but it may be hoped we shall not do any thing unbecoming ourselves, as a brave and judicious nation.—Our pleasures and amusements ought to be adapted to our climate, our genius, our laws, our religion ; and consequently the less we are softened by Italian sound, or vitiated by Italian voluptuousness, or deluded by Italian refinements, the less danger of departing from our proper character.

For these several reasons, I cannot but wish, that between the extremes of *piety* and *irreligion*, and the contests between *sense* and *sound*, we may find the means of obviating all reproaches against the *stage*. The *use* of the theatre is no less obvious than the *abuse* of it. To improve the one, and correct the other, should be the business of the ablest heads and purest hearts.

With regard to our *comic scenes*, at which you throw your darts, it may be observed, that modern writers are by far the *least impure*. Indeed there are still some passages wrought
up

up so high, to favor the impurity of the heart, and in which the author presents so much incense to the corruption of his audience, as render them improper to exhibit before a Christian civilized people. We have no need of spurs to quicken our pace in the paths of vice. We may, as Christians, lament the *superstition* and *infidelity* of the *French*; but *they* would not suffer such scenes on *their* stage. I speak of some parts, which show too plainly there is a central point which moves the author's mind, and on which he turns his audience. Some revision would therefore be worthy of the warmest friend to humanity, religion, and our country. This seems to be particularly wanted in *Farquhar*, *Congreve*, and some others. Whatever we may retain of their wit, or variety of character, some scenes should not be exposed to public view. As their pieces now stand, they are fit only to be dedicated to the *Cyprian goddess*, or an unchristianised audience. Far better is the unmeaning sing-song humor of the times, than exhibitions calculated for purposes diametrically opposite to the purity of Christianity. Refined and polished

ed education shudders at the thought. Can a woman who means to pass for virtuous attend to scenes, and go abroad into the impure air of a public theatre, to visit those impure exhibitions of life, fit only for the stews?

The first lesson in the school of amusement is this: let it be *innocent*; the next, let it be *useful* to improvement. For this reason, as music is in such repute, that *there seems to be no living without it*, try to persuade the musical fraternities to correct our taste and practice in our *churches*. How vilely is this seraphic art prostituted in those very temples devoted to the worship of the Almighty! Upon my word, my friend, I am often extremely shocked at the gross absurdities which many organists introduce. They call them *voluntaries*, that is, something supposed to be played *extempore*, and without study; I imagine originally found to be more energetic than a labored composition, and calculated to relieve the audience from the intenseness of their thoughts, and at the same time to cheer and enliven their devotion. But this inharmonious medley generally proves just the reverse. *A crude and indigested*

indigested extempore prayer cannot offend the understanding more than *these voluntaries*. They are oftentimes as impious as inharmonious, a mere jargon of discordant sounds, applicable to nothing in nature but the absurdity of the organist, who plays it off on the poor congregation. Can a greater act of insolence be offered them?

These careless or dissolute players, like young surgeons operating on a *dead body*, seem to have no other view than to try their skill in the church, by dissonance, how to strike out harmony in some other place.

Not fearing God, or not *seeming* to fear him, nor the congregation, they express no ambition to elevate the heart, or warm it into devotion. If this is not the effect of *uninstructed* youth, or gross *ignorance*, it must be the produce of *impiety*. How much longer this custom is to be permitted, I know not; but it seems to be high time to put a stop to it. The inadvertency of some of you, gentlemen, whose profession it is to show us the way to heaven, is in this respect great; the indolence of the laity, much greater. The least attention in persons
of

of condition of either rank or station, might rectify the abuse: I am persuaded a little admonition would deter some organists, who *inadvertently* fall into this *bad practice*; and that others, who are opiated, would be controlled, rather than lose their office. Your discourses from the pulpit abound in sense, and your periods are frequently harmonious. It is to be presumed you mean to promote solid piety and devotion, and consequently to bring in all the *auxiliaries* you can. It would be a high indignity offered you to suppose you are indifferent as to what passes on these occasions. But why then, my friend, are not *organists* confined to the kind of music they are to play in churches, as well as *clerks*, that they do not sing psalms in the measure of a jig? I know from experience, that it is far from being impracticable to prescribe to organists what they shall play, where their judgment fails, or their inclination betrays them.—There seems to be a very material distinction, obvious even to those who enter no further into music than the difference of effect, according to time and place. Mr. Avison, in his quotation-note from *Tosi*,
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informs us, that “ by the antients, airs were
 “ sung in three different manners ; for the
 “ theatre, the style was lively and various ;
 “ for the chamber, delicate and finished ; for
 “ the church, moving and grave. This dif-
 “ ference, to very many *moderns*, is quite un-
 “ known.”—I believe indeed *it is*, and most
 of all to many organists in England, in the
 choice of the composition, as well as the
manner and *expression*. I presume the hand of
 the artist, on an instrument, has a great affinity
 with the conduct of the voice in singing, or in
 reading, where words are clearly and harmo-
 niously articulated.

I do not mean to extend my animadversions
 beyond what is obvious to *common sense* : I my-
 self have no other ; but I think, that a nation
 so refined in manners, so elegant in taste, so
 solid in judgment, in the affairs of this world,
 and yet so negligent in such a material article,
 is no where else to be found on the face of the
 globe.

You must also be sensible, that we are no
 less unhappy in our ordinary manner of singing
 psalms. A serious mind will always find some

useful meditation in the sense, whatever the sound may be ; but to an ear which has the least idea of harmony, the croaking of frogs in a fenny ground cannot grate more harshly than the screaming of *parish-children*, or the *drawling manner* of some *parish-clerks* and congregations.

Singing may be easily taught children, and handed down from generation to generation : a little attention will bring them to their natural soft harmonious pitch, without the smallest injury to them as to the manner in which they are to get their bread. If soft and harmonious speech is better than a rapid discordant manner of speaking, why should we not teach children one as well as the other ?

It is a most exquisite entertainment to the heart, as well as the understanding, to hear the praises of God expressed with a clear articulation, a soft harmonious voice, in true and proper time and measure, by a boy, and still more by a girl, of seven, eight, or nine years of age : in their state of innocence, which renders them like a superior order of Beings, this pleasure is above description. At the

Foundling-hospital, you may perchance hear a specimen of this soft melody.

As to psalmody in general, go into *Holland*, and many parts of *Germany*, and the protestant cantons of *Switzerland*, and hear the people sing. It is amazing the effect of their harmony to engage attention to the subject-matter of their devotion. Some of them sing in two or three parts, but in the simplest manner in use: in those countries, there is a kind of measure which is so spirited, and at the same time so solemn and melodious, that these reformed churches cast the darkest shade upon ours, as to this principal means of engaging the attention of the major part of the congregation, namely the *common people*.

In England we are apt to refine too much, and sometimes treat things as contemptible, or *indifferent*, which are of great moment. We act as if the common people were divines, or first-rate philosophers, tho' we know just the reverse to be the case. Thus we overlook some excellencies we do not possess; whilst the substantial purity of our doctrine engages us to rest on it, independant of those
aids

aids which reason and experience lead us to believe are of the greatest moment.

That music in churches, either vocal or instrumental, may be advantageously employed, is beyond dispute, from the practice of all Christian countries. This truth is particularly verified by some of the established national churches, as well parochial as cathedral, amongst us; and also by some of the *sectaries*, which abound in this land. *Their* singing in time and measure, and with harmony, has so wonderful a power over the minds of the common people, that it seems to operate on them irresistibly, and is one of the reasons why they desert their parish-churches; and a very strong reason also why we should correct our taste and manner in that which is of such universal concernment.

Mr. Avison's remarks concerning the power of music to tame a *ferocious disposition*, may be in some degree applied to the unhappiness we labor under, with regard to our ferocity in singing in our churches, at the very moment that so great a bustle is made on the account of harmony

mony and musical expression on our theatres and in private houses.—“ Music,” he says, “ is a kind of medium between the bodily exercises, that render men fierce and hardy, and speculative sciences, that render them unsociable and sour. It cannot be said that music inspires virtue, for this would be inconceivable; but it prevents the effects of *savage institutions*, and enables the soul to have such a share in the education, as it could never have without the assistance of harmony.”

Now, *my friend*, as it is so very evident that we fall into some *gross barbarisms* in our worship, respecting the musical part of it, and yet by no means intend to affront our Maker by any burlesque addresses to him; however remote it may be from the point whence you set out, if you wish to render your speculations substantially useful, try if by any skilful management, you can render the musical passion of the times subservient to this great end. This would be most truly worthy of you; and whilst we cultivate a *true* and *solid* zeal for our religion,

ligion, both clergy and laity may mutually assist each other in accomplishing a purpose so pregnant with good, and so instrumental to the honor of God and our own happiness. Farewell.

P. S. I would beg leave further to remark, that as the effect of a good organ, well played on, is in such esteem with us; in addition to the correction of the *measure* in singing, and where there is no *organ*, a *bassoon*, on which any country-fellow may soon learn to play well enough for the purpose, I know has a very good effect, and supplies a majestic accompaniment.

L E T T E R V I I I .

UPON a general view of our situation, may we not venture to pronounce, that some of our customs are not worthy of the advantages we enjoy? The possession of riches alone will never lead to a knowledge of the art of *living*, so as to do honor to the good sense and religion of our country. There must be something more than *riches*, and more than *taste*, with regard to the external appendages of affluence and grandeur. There must be *a more steady use of understanding, a more constant exercise of reason*, as well as the *possession* of these great properties.

It will lead us too far to enter into a detail of all that our *zealous* wishes may suggest. But something more may be said *in honor of the sabbath*, and in conservation of that purity which the *Anglican* church has such pretensions to, upon a comparison with others. And since it is agreed on all sides, even by those few who fondly dispute the *divine appointment of the sabbath*,

sabbath, that it is a wise institution, it must be for want of thought, more than any other cause, why it is ever treated in a languid or superficial manner by any part of the Christian world.— And since the observance of it is pregnant with so much good to the bodies, as well as the souls of mankind, it ought to be revered: it is a proof of folly, weakness, and wickedness, not to revere it. Many, I fear, do not recollect that the *Christian sabbath* is a constant memorial of the *resurrection of Christ*, the great work of redemption being completed on that day. Those who have any gratitude in their nature; any hope of heaven; any ambition to cultivate a spiritual temper of mind, cannot pass over this consideration in a careless manner, but rather long for the return of every *seventh day*, that they may exalt their hearts with thanksgiving, joy, and triumph, in the contemplation of the goodness, the wisdom, the mercy of the supreme benefactor to mankind.

Whether the *Lutherans*, or *Calvinists*, or *Gallican* reformed churches, do by any express permission allow of diversions on the evening

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of the sabbath, is not much to our purpose : some of these people *allow* it to themselves ; but it does not therefore follow, that they are *more in the right than we are*, or that this indulgence constitutes any part of the purity of their doctrine or practice.

Such amusements among them may be derived from the *customs of the papists*, from whom they are separated : for tho' they differ in religious tenets, they agree in the *love of cards and other diversions*. Such customs falling-in with the genius and temper of a people, it may be no wonder if they were not prohibited by the reformers. It must also be considered, that there is a stricter discipline, with regard to religious duties among these people, in other respects, than *we* are disposed to submit to. Under so free a civil government as ours, with so ample a toleration in religious concerns, we can hardly brook such discipline as theirs.

Human nature ever has the same propensities. We see among the *Jews* of old, when surrounded by idolatrous nations, how very easily they were led astray by the example of those nations, tho' detached from them under
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the severest commands of their almighty legislator.

As to the *Lutherans*, they are divided and subdivided; some being nearer, some more distant from the church of Rome; but in general they differ least from that church of any of the reformed part of Christendom; and, for this reason, *their* example seems to be no rule at all to us.

In *Geneva*, where *Calvin* reigns more triumphant than in any other part of the world, they do not allow of *public shows or exhibitions* on any days; probably for political reasons; and yet they play at cards on Sundays; that is, some who take greater liberties than others do this: but, to their honor be it said, they go to *divine service*, I am told, *thrice on the Sunday*, to hear the scriptures read, and sermons preached. Go into *Scotland*, and you will find public shows on the six days; but on the seventh many will not even dress any meat.—Some learned gentlemen tell us of *fourteen hundred* errors or heresies in the doctrine of Calvin. Now, whether there are so many hundreds, or only so many units; whether pre-

destination be intelligible on any principle of reason, or the consistency of the divine attributes, or the freedom of mens minds, these are questions we need not distress ourselves about. If some *Calvinists* are more rigid than we are, and some not so strict, what is it to us? We must consider what reason and experience lead us to believe, as to *opinion*; and what the same reason and experience teach us to think as to the propriety of our *practice*, taking in all considerations, and leaving the rest of mankind to act as they think best. This we are assured of, that custom and habit govern more than reason; and that no nation upon earth ought to be more guarded than ourselves, as to a precedent of any hurtful tendency.

With regard to the reformed churches on the continent of Europe, upon a comparison of other nations, I have known that some Armenians of the Greek or Armenian church, being in Persia, have followed some *Mahomedan* customs. Whether to ingratiate themselves, or from mere example, some of them pay honors at the tombs of *Mahomedan saints*, alledging, that as they were *good men*, there
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can be *no harm* in revering their memories. It is thus all notions of good and evil are subject to be perverted.

We have had an eminent churchman in days of yore who wrote in *defence of diversions on the sabbath day*; but at length he lost his head for his opinions; and I do not find any such principle hath been ever adopted as a law. That the doctrine is in general inconsistent with sound policy, may be deduced from our genius, and fondness of liberty. To shew a particular countenance to any practice whatever, which is so very subject to abuse, must be thought dangerous in this land.

As to our common people in the country, we can hardly avoid winking at some practices. Their proper scene of action is in the field, and some kind of gambols are as familiar to peasants, as walking, or discoursing seriously, to people of superior education. Whilst there is a decency and reserve kept up among the higher ranks of people, there is no danger of much mischief descending to the lower: but let this restraint be once levelled, as I have had occasion to observe to you already, into what mon-

strous excesses may we not *wander*? Both in our political and religious concerns, we must keep a constant eye on the *daring genius* of our nation; and, as example is so prevalent, be ever on the watch, that instead of making it our supreme ambition to save souls from death, we may not show the *thoughtless* part of our fellow-subjects the *way* to perdition. God knows we have already made it broad enough! Farewell.

LETTER

L E T T E R IX.

WITH regard to the *amusements* which you and I are supposing our good friends and neighbours are most fond of, the great object is, to make such improvements in the use of them, as may render them more rational, elegant, and convenient. But we mean still more: we mean to adapt them to the great ends of religion, and to render them more worthy of us, as a learned, sensible, and religious nation.—Therefore, my friend, besides the consideration of the absurdities which have crept into society, and the *barbarisms* which remain amongst us in the musical part of our public worship, let us try, *in seriousness of heart*, if we can suggest any thing proper to be attempted on this head, for others to improve upon. *Nothing* is superior to human industry which is the proper object of human attention; and *amusement* seems to be one of
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the objects in which *our minds are most deeply absorbed*. Custom has made it so.

To this end I would recommend some hints for a plan which may be consistent with the ends proposed, of exercising the noblest affections of the *heart*, at the same time entertaining the *fancy* in the most delightful manner. If you digest the out-lines of a plan, you must also give relief to the brilliant world in the *difficulties* they seem at present to labor under, which, if I mistake not, are very great.

It is ineffectual, if not *unfair*, to tell them what they should *not* do, unless you tell them also what they *should*. Amusement within doors must be provided ; but the easier the expence of it, in riches, time, or labor, the more happy ought we to esteem ourselves. Suppose it then to be on these principles :

1. Open your doors, not as a kind of *ridotto-room*, but be moderate in your numbers, (be it for *tea, dinners, suppers*, music, cards, or conversation) that your generosity may be esteemed, and not fall under its own weight, by an indiscriminate reception of a multitude.

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2. That the candidates for renown in music adopt this article in their musical creed ; that the most elegant assembly is that where the company are most at their ease, no one to be left neglected or unprovided with that which very few can long be easy without, namely, a seat, tho' it be only a board.

3. To have no *Sundays meetings* ; but in a domestic way, let the use of music, adapted to the purposes of piety, be deemed warrantable *on the sabbath*.

4. To give the preference to well-chosen psalms and parts of the scriptures, the words being in plain English, and in the Hebrew idiom.

N. B. This is evidently most fit to address the Almighty ; and there are so many admirable musical compositions adapted to the psalms, no one can be at a loss.—If your friends have not yet studied such compositions, the few you admit will be benefited in a double capacity, if they are put to the trial. If they perform fewer pieces, and those in a less perfect manner, *let it give you no pain*.

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5. When

5. When you think the day properly admits of company, request both performers and auditors to come by a certain hour, that they may not interrupt each other.

N. B. According to the present mode, one would imagine the *company* had as little respect for *themselves* as for the *diversion itself*. This will give a dignity and decorum to your entertainments, which seem to be much wanted.

6. Let every one of your company be supplied with the use of a *book* for their spiritual food, the same as you would lend every one at your table the use of a *knife and fork*.

7. Let such books be digested and printed, to contain the words of the music you usually play *.

8. These books to be bound in *leather* or *boards*, and so marked and distinguished, as not to be subject to be lost or removed.

N. B. The expence of these books will be only for once, and but small; tho' it is not to

* The anthems sung at the cathedral at *Westminster*, and also at *Durham*, are already in use in *one* private musical meeting, *which is hardly exceptionable in any respect*.

be imagined such a book can contain every thing you may sing or play for years to come, if it contains any considerable part, it will be a great satisfaction to a whole audience, as I know from experience. Thus, by the united force of sense and harmony, you will render your entertainments of this kind more elegant, and much superior in *design* and *taste*.

9. Whether you mean to have your musical entertainments more or less gay and lively, if you intend to make the most of life, and turn your amusements to advantage, indulge yourself in sense and piety, whether attended by less sound and parade or not.

10. Covet the solid approbation of the few, and of your own mind, not the volatile applause of a multitude.

11. Make your diversion contribute to the great ends of religion, by your taste, by your example, by your precept, that the manners of the age may be so far mended, and nothing injurious to posterity.

Laying aside all the pomp of a musical entertainment to which company is invited, I would have at least *two evenings* every week, when

you are in a family where there are *connoisseurs*, *domestics*, or *children*, calculated for the edification of servants and young persons, and purely and simply devoted to them. It should consist of variety, *viz.*

1. Some 80 or 100 fine lines in Milton, easy to understand; or some well-chosen chapter in the New Testament, to be read alternately by young persons, who should be taught, not merely to *utter* words, but *to read*.

N. B. Reading should be considered as a part of music, and as an accomplishment no less amiable, and in itself more lasting and useful.

2. A short penitential pathetic psalm, or verses from different psalms, to be sung elegantly, with such strength of voices as there may be, and accompanied, tho' it were only by a serpent, a bass viol, a bassoon; or, where there are only women performers, a simple harpsichord, or perchance by *vocal music* only.

3. One well-digested prayer well expressed; that is, to distinguish between simple reading of prayers and *praying*.

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4. One sermon, such as *Clarke's*, or *Sherlock's*, or *Seed's*, or *Warner's* discourses, which last are very short *.

5. The whole to be closed with an anthem; or where there is not strength enough, a few well-chosen verses from the psalms, performed in the best manner you can.

N. B. This would leave the minds of the young or old, the gentle or the simple, rather wishing for the continuance or repetition, than fatiated as they generally are with much praying, much preaching, much singing. Much of any thing cloy; but this would afford a more solid satisfaction to a private family, where joy should always reign, than all the pompous, tedious, elaborate musical entertainments which vanity or benignity can exhibit to our equals or superiors. How often are we hackneyed in amusement, and jaded with the travel of the same sounds, and even the same sense. This would also give a serious quickness to an entertainment, which it would be almost a shame to mention in polite com-

* Dr. Warner's is a collection and abstract of several of the most excellent discourses in our language.

pany. It would promote *private family-prayer*, and give it a *pleasing turn*.

Do you think, my friend, that such a plan, or rather such principles for a plan, of *two distinct musical entertainments*, one for company, and another for a private family only, with such corrections and additions as the sure guide *experience* may point out, might not produce good effects? If we were thus gently led into a sublime taste of sense, and relish of devotion, from a pleasing variety, our amusements would be virtues indeed. We might thus chant the praises of God, more joyfully, and with a purer and more exalted zeal, than the *poets* of old sung their verses in praise of the *heroes* of their own time, or those of ancient days.

What dazzles the eyes of the youthful and gay world is generally a mere *vision* of common objects, affording but little food for the mind. This plan might exalt the ideas of such persons, and give a *zest* to entertainments, in which there does not seem to be much solid sensibility at present.

I would therefore humbly recommend a further article of rational *amusement*; call it *amusement*, even with the addition of *rational*, and you may obtain some attention.

The pleasure of conversation is of all others the most natural; it is the *exercise of reason*; and as man is a rational creature, he must have a rational object for his pleasure; and the less mixed and compounded, the more pure and exalted will that pleasure be.—Let the young consider where they have been most attached, and run over the whole scene of joys they ever knew, and then pronounce in which they found the most heart-felt substantial pleasure;—*girls*, in their regards for *girls*, where minds have harmonized; *boys* for *boys*, and the sexes for each other, so far as can be supposed, abstracted from passion; and then let them say how God has made them, and how they often *unmake and undo* themselves.

There is not a more excellent saying than the *Persian* proverb, “The conversation of a friend brightens the eyes.” As we grow old, we find all pleasures, except society, dwindle, and frequently evaporate; but neither

ther blindness, nor gout, nor stone, nor palsies, can entirely rob us of this pleasure ; even *deafness*, where the knowledge of speaking by fingers is employed, cannot deprive us of this *first*, this *last*, this *greatest* pleasure, which the benignant author of nature has so liberally indulged us in.—But as we learn to think before we speak, tho' the heart and the tongue do not always keep pace, it is necessary to *think well* before we can *speak well* ; and we must accustom ourselves to a proper *manner*, before we acquire a *pleasing utterance*.

In one of my former letters, I took notice of the impurities of the stage, and how much it wounds the great system of rational amusements, as it poisons the fountain whence so much instruction, as well as diversion, flows. But were this abuse corrected, and masculine sense and piety supported, yet *every* one cannot reach the enjoyment of the stage ; nor is it fit for *any* one to be always in a theatre.

I have no high opinion of boys or young men *acting plays*, except it be at school, under the eye of a master ; and then it should be only passages of plays, in order to teach them
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how to speak according to nature, not to repeat lines in the theatrical strain, or strut in buskins. But for *girls*, no distress for amusement should drive them to this expedient. I think, however, *they* may *read* some parts of some plays, in company round a table, each taking her book and her *part*; none but females to have any share, and expunging every thing, with a judicious pen, which can be supposed to teach sentiments that are false, or, being true, are too tender.

I am tempted to think, that young persons might in this manner be taught to *read*, to *speak*, to *think*, and, so far, to *act* an amiable part in life.

It seems to be productive of no other good than exercising the memory, to require a number of lines to be learnt by heart: but to make sentences and couplets replete with sense and sublimity, our own *by memory*, is like picking up diamonds washed from mountains of earth.

The same rule of instruction holds for both sexes. Religion is common to both, and so ought every cardinal virtue to be esteemed,

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fortitude not excepted : but in lieu of housewifery, and female works, we may establish *politics, commerce, laws, and the effects of war*, which might give us a better supply of *statesmen* than can be expected from *card-playing*.

The most captivating charms of person become dull and insipid, in the esteem of men of understanding, if not supported by the superior powers of speech and thought.—The philosopher says, “*Speak, that I may see thee.*” We may add, “*Speak well, that I may see if thou art wise and virtuous ; not redundant in words, but persuasive and instructive ; and that the law of kindness dwells on thy tongue. Dost thou understand, that the manner of speaking, and the turn of the thoughts, are acquired by practice, in the same manner as the knowledge of cards ? Thou devoteest many hours to the torturing thy hair with fire and pinchers, to make it less beautiful, and accelerate its decay. And what avails thy rich attire, but to constitute a part of a gold and silver raree-show !—Thou spendest much time at cards ; and how often doth avarice or disgust fluctuate in thy mind, and injure thy soul, whilst thy health, and the harmony of thy features, suffer ?*

—But what time dost thou set apart for the study of moral rectitude, the practice of generosity, charity, and those virtues which do most honor to human nature?—Hast thou considered, not only what will amuse and promote thy schemes of pleasure, but what will tend to make thee really happy?—Do'st thou leave things to chance and nature, *corrupt as thy nature is*, or *use the means* to render thyself amiable in the sight of God, and in the eyes of the judicious world, devoid of all hypocrisy, pride, and affectation?"——These are questions which might lead us to some knowledge of the windings and foolishness of the hearts of the gay world, *man or woman*: and very important questions they are, when it is considered, (as was observed half a century ago) "that many of the misfortunes in families arise from the trifling way *women* have in spending their time, and gratifying only their eyes and ears, instead of their reason and understanding." We may *now* add, *men* also.

With regard to my proposal, I apprehend we have several fine pieces of poetry in our language in the dramatic way, or which might be easily thrown into a drama, without one

false or vicious sentiment: and there can be no doubt, if an attempt of this kind were carried into practice, and obtain credit, but the ingenious poet, or polite moral prose-writer, would soon exhibit many excellent pieces for this conversation-table-drama, more according to reason, nature, religion, and real life, than any production intended for the theatre only can be.

We are at this time as much on the *que vive* as the *French*; not in our genius so naturally inclined to flutter as they, for we are more thoughtful; our religion and laws train us up to a more solid way of thinking; but still, the increase of our wealth, our success in war, the happiness of our constitution, the judicious expedients used as *temporary*, if not lasting means, to hide from our eyes the mischievous effects of war, with respect to our load of debt; these operate as so many charms, especially in our opulent and most populous cities.

In the mean time, we seem to be departing from that princely dignity, political attention, pious and humane regard to the inferior classes of people, which constitute the true glory of this land.

land. When these qualities are diffused over every spot of earth, the patrimony or possession of gentlemen of landed estates, how much more important do such appear than in great cities, in the eager chace of *amusements*, which, *Daphne* like, defeats their ardor !

We are becoming too much like some other nations of Europe, who, not pretending to the solid advantages we enjoy, all their superior classes of people congregate themselves in the seat of empire, whilst they nourish the head, and leave the limbs to wither. This is not yet the case with us, or not in the same degree as with many of them ; but our present passion, I say, may easily lead us into that immoral, impolitic, slavish system.

You know the French say of life in general, *vive la bagatelle !* And indeed, my friend, many things which create joy or sorrow are, in the great view of human life, absolute *trifles*. Yet to expect all people to be profound philosophers, is no less *trifling* and absurd. Since we *must* be so much obliged to *trifles*, let us not neglect to learn the value of that which we ought to give a better name to. Let us make a *judi-*
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cious choice, and consider what *pleasures* are least pernicious to health, most productive of freedom from pain, and best calculated to establish, not the belief only, but the firm hope of immortality; remembering this *poetical adage*,

“ *Pleasure, or true or falsely understood,
Our greatest evil, or our greatest good.*”

Thus shall we make our amusements contribute to the end for which we are sent into the world: this *end*, to all appearance, has *great regard* to *moral* and *intellectual improvements*, otherwise one might be tempted to think there is no great difference between *man* and *beast*.

Whether we consider those who are marching off the *stage of life*, or those who are just come on it, the way to acquire as high ideas as possible of our own dignity, is to render our pleasures rational and sublime, and worthy of our nature, that we may think *justly* of ourselves; and whilst we bend our souls in dust and ashes, aspire in real *practice* and habit of life at the joys of immortality.

Habit affects the *old* as well as *young*, and folly is folly, be it found where it may: and to be

[III]

be tardy in *whatever reason suggests to be right*, because we deviate from the common beaten path of life, can be no proof of wisdom.

A plan of this kind could never offend the most pious, or disgust the most judicious: it would not displease the most profane, nor could they attend to it without feeling some impressions of religion. As this is demonstrable from *reason*, it would be soon confirmed by *experience*.

More is in the power of those who take the lead in the world of amusement, either to do *good* or *evil*, than they are aware of; and if every thing we do, ought to be done *to the honor of God*, we should consider *how* it may be done most properly, whether according to *the fashion* or not.

In the mean time, those who think of religion as a *pleasing task* only, should first learn how to perform that task *with pleasure*. Tho' habit may render it *grateful*, and even *joyful*, they should not forget that there is a *warfare* to be maintained against the corruption of the heart, which requires vigilance and *circumspection*. The victory we aspire at was never gained by a thoughtless inactivity.

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This is not the language of those who *dare not* look back on the *time they have spent*, nor know how to contemplate the *present moment*, and tremble to look forward on the unknown land to which they are travelling; but these are not the persons to whose guidance we would chuse to commit ourselves.

Happy he who can survey both worlds with an unbroken mind. And since it is so very obvious to *common sense*, that without regard to *age*, or *sex*, mankind are under one common tie and obligation to account for all their actions, no hour of time excepted, it is surely necessary to *think what it is we are about*, and prepare for all events.

I took notice in my former letter with relation to *music*, of the substantial taste of the *ancient academy*, or musical fraternity in the Strand; but I forgot to tell you, they have aptly borrowed from *Shakespeare* this *motto*, and placed it before the words of the music they usually perform,

“ Now good Cesario, but that piece of song,
 “ That old and antique song we heard last night,
 “ Methought

“ *Methought it did relieve my passion much,*
 “ *More than light airs and recollected terms*
 “ *Of these most brisk and giddy-paced times.*”

This is prettily said, and I fear apt enough; yet I do not recommend your casting any darker shade on this period than experience will warrant. All times are *giddy*, tho' not in the same manner or degree: and it is at all seasons *necessary* to combat the prevailing folly of the times; but the more we do it in the spirit of good-nature, the more it will be attended to. On the other hand, it is also necessary to *examine* well what we *approve* as *good*, and what we *condemn* as *evil*, with a view to that which is most *practicable* and consistent, not a *visionary* ideal perfection.

To this purpose, let us consider what things are most pleasing to a people in whom good sense is so peculiar a characteristic, and for whom amusement for the mind, as well as food for the body, must be provided. We may as well acknowledge our weakness, and say, *we are as fond of diversions as any neighbour nation, whom we sometimes affect to despise on*
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that very account. Nay we love amusement to that degree, let it be amusement, and tho' ever so virtuous, we will receive it with both our arms.

Yet, with all our sins and imperfections on our heads, we have a vast fund of candor and good-nature: we know how to commend virtue in others, even when we want it ourselves. In the mean time, as inclination is the law of fancy, whatever we have an inclination to, that let us follow: there is but one material clause of exception annexed to this rule, viz. *provided there be no reason to the contrary.* Now, to *consider seriously, and without seriousness there is properly no consideration at all*, what reasons there may be to the contrary of our desires, is the substance of one of the *greatest duties* of man, who being *rational*, is therefore *accountable*, and must, for the same reason, prepare for his account.

Whilst you live, my friend, make as rational a feast of life as nature means you should, and rise neither surfeited, nor impatient to repeat the enjoyment; but submit to *his* will, who is the sovereign disposer of all things, remembering that one day of virtuous deeds is of more worth than a year *without ac-*

count, or with a black one. To be temperate in the enjoyment even of the pleasure of beholding the sun, is highly becoming man, who holds his life by so uncertain a tenure. Do not, *Stoic-like*, soar *fantastically* high, nor bend to little incidents. Expand your mind, and take in every object that can delight your heart, and lead you on to a joyful immortality. Thus will you sleep with soft content about your head, and waken every day to a joyful morning, till the appointed time shall come of your transit from this *mixed* state of labor, sorrow, ease and joy, to that *unmixed* state wherein *all* is rest and transport.

“ *Be thy lot good, or be it ill,*
 “ *Life ebbs out at the same rate still ;*
 “ *Whether with busy cares oppress’d,*
 “ *You wear the sullen time away ;*
 “ *Or whether to sweet ease and rest*
 “ *You sometimes give a day.”*

This is true with regard to the actual duration of our time ; but it is the infelicity of human life to measure time by its tediousness, and the pain and anxiety which so often attends

tends it. This evil also has its remedy; for sorrow drieth the bones, and soul and body part so much the sooner. But I need not tell you, that some kinds of sorrow are so repugnant to the benignity of nature, as to become criminal.

Let the joyous world however carry this in mind, that “the house of mourning is better” than the house of feasting:” that is, when it so happens that our sorrows lead to joy, or our joys to sorrow. Reason and religion are our only guides in making those distinctions which the various events of life render so indispensibly necessary to be made.

I wish any of my thoughts on this occasion may be of use to your design; for I know your hours are intentionally employed for the honor of God and the welfare of your country and mankind. So far you have a title to the regard of all honest men; and be assured, that I am most sincerely

Yours.

APRIL 3,
1765.



T H E E N D.



